

July Hoosier Responder article by IDHS Executive Director Joe Wainscott

Indiana's Radiological Emergency Preparedness Program (REPP)

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) recently hosted an annual meeting focusing on the Radiological Emergency Preparedness Program (REPP). The purpose of this meeting was to update nuclear power plant representatives and other state and local stakeholders who are involved with Indiana's REPP.

This program plans and prepares the state of Indiana to respond to incidents that may occur at one of the four nuclear power stations closest to Indiana borders and result in a release of radioactive material that could impact Indiana. These four power stations are within a 50-mile Ingestion Pathway Zone (IPZ). Two of these stations, Braidwood and Dresden, are located in Illinois and two stations, DC Cook and Palisades, are located in Michigan. All nuclear power plant off-site response activities are regulated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

IDHS is responsible for the development and implementation of emergency response plans, protective action procedures, field training programs, public notification and emergency management. IDHS cannot overstate the importance of the Indiana REPP as a response planning effort to help protect Indiana citizens from the effects of a nuclear power plant event. IDHS works in coordinated effort with the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) in all planning efforts for a REP response.

All of Indiana property lies outside of the 10-mile Emergency Planning Zone (EPZ) of all nuclear power plants; however, there are eleven (11) Indiana counties that lie within the IPZ. Within the IPZ, the largest risk of exposure to radiation is the consumption of radioactive materials as a result of the radioactive particles from a release entering into the food chain. In the event of an incident at one of these nuclear power stations located where it has the potential to impact Indiana, IDHS has implemented plans and will provide public notification through media releases on the radio or television. IDHS's website provides additional information to assist the public.

A REPP brochure has been developed to share information with farmers, food processors, distributors, and all Indiana residents on ways to protect individuals and the food chain during a REPP response. In addition, the REPP brochure covers topics on use, disposal and recovery of food sources, nuclear emergency terms and actions, explanation of radiation and contamination, information on nuclear power plants, and health effects of radioactive contamination. During a REPP response, IDHS will also dispatch personnel to assist locals with response efforts. These efforts may include collecting samples of milk, forage, crops (seasonal), processed foods, soil and surface water in the IPZ. These samples will be analyzed to determine the level of contamination, if any. The field data and information received from the nuclear power plants will be used by IDHS to determine the best course of action to protect Hoosiers and the food chain.

This 2010 annual meeting allowed participants to share information on changes, issues or concerns with the Indiana REPP. Meeting attendees included representatives from all four nuclear power stations near the Indiana border, FEMA Region V REPP, IDHS, ISDH, and several other state and local agencies.



Presentations by IDHS and partners included updates from FEMA, ingestion pathway and radiological planning at the local and state level, an ISDH radiological health program review and equipment capabilities, public information warnings and emergency response operations.

Other items discussed were IDHS projects including the final revision of the Indiana Ingestion Pathway Plan, the REPP awareness training being provided locally to the eleven Indiana REPP counties and neighboring counties, and the online REPP Awareness training option that will be available soon. IDHS is also in the process of partnering with state and local agencies to revise the sampling team training and procedures to be presented at the end of 2010 through 2011. The Indiana Department of Homeland Security continues to actively seek ways to improve upon the REP Program to ensure an effective response and protect all Indiana citizens.